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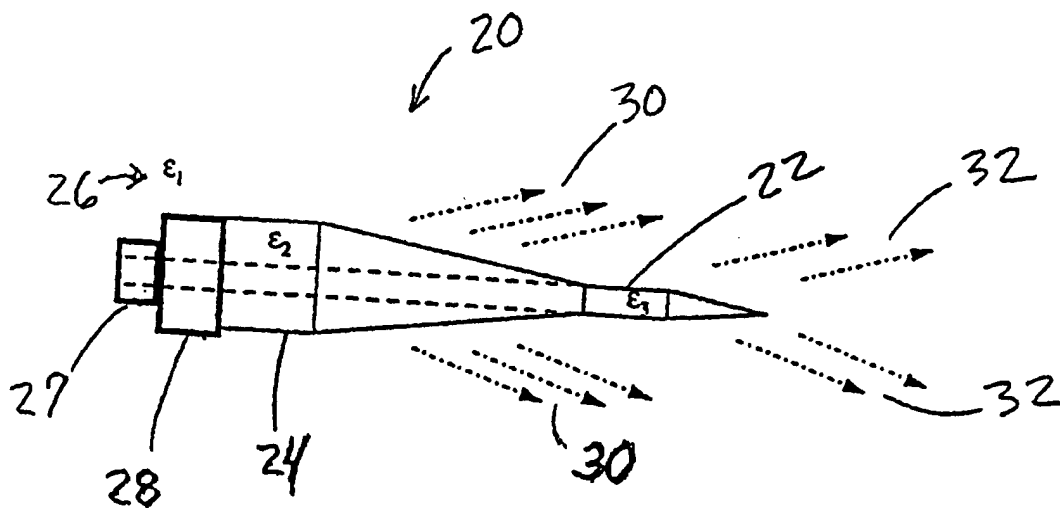
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For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guidance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the beginning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.

(54) Title: COAXIAL DIELECTRIC ROD ANTENNA



(57) Abstract: An antenna. The antenna (20) includes a first dielectric antenna rod having a first dielectric constant (ϵ_3). The first dielectric antenna rod (22) is coupled to a first frequency transmission source (27) for propagating first frequency band radiation from the first dielectric antenna rod into a medium having a medium dielectric constant (ϵ_1). A second dielectric antenna rod (24) is provided having a second dielectric constant (ϵ_2). The second dielectric antenna rod is coupled to a second frequency transmission source (28) for propagating second frequency band radiation from the second dielectric antenna rod into the medium. The first dielectric antenna rod is coaxially mounted within the second dielectric antenna rod. The first dielectric constant is greater than the second dielectric constant. The second dielectric constant is greater than the medium dielectric constant.

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COAXIAL DIELECTRIC ROD ANTENNA

FIELD

5 This invention relates to the field of antennas, and more particularly, to antenna structures for covering a diversity of frequency bands. In one aspect, this invention relates to a coaxial dielectric rod antenna with multi-frequency collinear apertures.

10 BACKGROUND

A large number of different radio frequency systems have come into use for communication, navigation, electronic warfare and radar systems. State of the art automotive and aerospaceborne vehicles which utilize such radio
15 frequency systems could have more than a dozen separate antennas to cover diversity of frequency bands. However, many mobile platforms have limited space for multiple antennas operating in widely separated frequency bands.

Alternatively, a number of wide bandwidth antenna elements have been
20 developed for electronic warfare and signal intelligence systems. Current state-of-art antennas include flared notch elements each with about an octave of bandwidth (2: 1). Other antenna elements such as spirals, log periodic elements, biconical dipoles and conical monopoles all have a

bandwidth limit of about 2:1 and they tend to have relatively large physical dimensions, and, as such, are not well-suited for mobile platform / vehicular use.

- 5 One solution to this multi-antenna, multi-aperture problem now faced by land, sea, air and spaceborne vehicles has been multi-function, multi-frequency, phased array antenna apertures with electronic beam forming and scanning/tracking. However, today broadband antenna elements and phased array antennas are limited by the bandwidth and dimensions of the
- 10 antenna feed elements to a maximum frequency ratio of about one octave (2:1). Broad bandwidth phased array antennas composed of broadband feed elements must address several conflicting design parameters:
- 1) low side lobes require that the phase centers of the feed antennas be
 - 15 closely spaced one half wavelength apart at the highest frequency of operation;
 - 2) feed antennas have dimensions approaching one half wavelength at the lowest operating frequency;
 - 20 3) large numbers of broadband amplifiers must be connected to every feed antenna in a 2:1 bandwidth array; and

- 4) often a second set of crossed linear antenna elements and associated electronics are required if the array is to transmit and receive signals in orthogonal linear polarization and in both circular polarizations.
- 5 Therefore, there exists a need for an effective antenna structure which can cover a diversity of frequency bands, a diversity of polarizations, and can be useful in phased array antenna systems. The present invention provides a unique solution to meet such needs.

10 SUMMARY

In accordance with the present invention, an inventive three dimensional, ultra-broad bandwidth, multi-aperture, dielectric antenna is provided which combines features of tapered dielectric rod antennas and coaxial dielectric
15 waveguide transmission lines. The coaxial dielectric rod antenna (CDRA) in accordance with the present invention has multi-frequency collinear apertures which can be optimized for use as individual multi-band antennas or as feed elements in broad bandwidth active aperture phased array antennas. In essence, the CDRA in accordance with the present
20 invention combines into a single structure many separate antennas which cover a diversity of frequency bands.

A first embodiment of the invention includes a first dielectric antenna rod having a first dielectric constant. The first dielectric antenna rod is coupled

to a first frequency transmission source for propagating first frequency band radiation from the first dielectric antenna rod into a medium having a medium dielectric constant. A second dielectric antenna rod is provided having a second dielectric constant. The second dielectric antenna rod is
5 coupled to a second frequency transmission source for propagating second frequency band radiation from the second dielectric antenna rod into the medium. The first dielectric antenna rod is coaxially mounted within the second dielectric antenna rod. The first dielectric constant is greater than the second dielectric constant. The second dielectric constant is greater
10 than the medium dielectric constant.

In accordance with the first embodiment, the second dielectric antenna rod can include an axial cylindrical cavity along the length of the second dielectric antenna rod. The axial cylindrical cavity can be filled with a
15 dielectric powder having the first dielectric constant. The dielectric powder can be secured within the axial cylindrical cavity by end plugs having the first dielectric constant and be located at respective proximal and distal ends of the second dielectric antenna rod. Further, the first frequency transmission source can be axially coupled to the first dielectric antenna
20 rod while the second frequency transmission source can be coupled to the second dielectric antenna by a transmission line axially offset from the second dielectric antenna rod. The second dielectric antenna rod can be made of a thermoplastic resin. The dielectric powder can be barium tetra-
titanate or nickel-aluminum titanate.

Another embodiment of the present invention includes a first dielectric antenna rod having a first dielectric constant. The first dielectric antenna rod is coupled to a first frequency transmission source for propagating first frequency band radiation from the first dielectric antenna rod into a medium having a medium dielectric constant. A second dielectric antenna rod is provided having a second dielectric constant. The second dielectric antenna rod is coupled to a second frequency transmission source for propagating second frequency band radiation from the second dielectric antenna rod into the medium. The first dielectric antenna rod is coaxially mounted within the second dielectric antenna rod. A third dielectric antenna rod having a third dielectric constant is also provided. The third dielectric antenna rod is coupled to a third frequency transmission source for propagating third frequency band radiation from the third dielectric antenna rod into the medium. The second dielectric antenna rod is coaxially mounted within the third dielectric antenna rod. The first dielectric constant is greater than the second dielectric constant. The second dielectric constant is greater than the third dielectric constant. The third dielectric constant is greater than the medium dielectric constant.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Fig. 1 shows in schematic form a prior art polyrod tapered dielectric antenna.

Fig. 2 shows in schematic form an embodiment of the present invention.

Fig. 3 shows a partially exploded perspective view of an embodiment of the present invention.

- 5 Figs. 4a - 4c show plan and section views of an embodiment of the present invention.

Fig. 5 shows Fig. 2 shows in schematic form another embodiment of the present invention.

10

Figs. 6a - 6c show alternative embodiments of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

- 15 A uniform rod of dielectric material is a well-known type transmission line for electromagnetic waves ranging in wavelength from radio to optical frequencies. Various microwave and milli-meter wave dielectric transmission lines have been demonstrated, including single dielectric fibers, as described in U.S. Patent 4, 293,833 issued to Popa, and coaxial
20 fibers of multiple dielectrics as described in U.S. Patent 4,800,350 issued to Bridges et al. A microwave transition using dielectric waveguide is described in U.S. Patent 5,684,495 issued to Dyott et al. in which a dielectric rod antenna couples a standard metallic waveguide to a dielectric rod transmission line.

Similarly, narrowband polyrod dielectric antennas and antenna arrays are well-known. Such antennas include those developed at the Bell Telephone Laboratories during World War II for radar antenna array elements, as described in the Bell System Technical Journal, Vol. XXVI, 1947, pages 837 - 851. Also, an embedded dielectric rod antenna has been described in U.S. Patent 4,274, 097 issued to Krall et al. that embeds a dielectric rod antenna with a relative dielectric constant of 84 in a dielectric cylinder of relative dielectric constant 81. High dielectric constant material is used to form a compact narrow beam antenna.

10

Further, dual frequency antennas have been developed involving a dielectric transmission line. A dual frequency feed satellite antenna horn is described in U.S. Patent 4,785,306 issued to Adams in which a Ku band dielectric transmission line passes along the center of a conventional metallic C-band waveguide and then exits through an end wall.

15

In dielectric transmission lines of this type a portion of the energy travels along the inside of the dielectric rod and a portion travels along in the space outside of the rod. Electromagnetic energy can propagate along the dielectric fiber in a series of modes with the lowest order HE₁₁ mode being the mode of primary interest. The useful bandwidth of the dielectric waveguide extends from the lowest frequency at which the HE₁₁ mode is reasonably well contained up to the lowest frequency where the next lowest order modes, the TM₀₁ and TE₀₁, can propagate.

20

When internal or external discontinuities are encountered along the dielectric rod, radiation takes place. This tendency was used to advantage at the Bell Telephone Laboratories in the 1940s to form the microwave "polyrod" antennas. A representative polyrod tapered dielectric antenna 10 is

5 schematically depicted in Fig. 1 and is discussed in more detail in Chapter 16 of the Antenna Engineering Handbook, published by McGraw-Hill, 1961. Dielectric antenna 10 is coupled to metal waveguide 12 and typically has a feed taper 14, a body taper 16, a straight section 18 and a terminal taper section 20. In the dielectric rod antenna radiation is encouraged from
10 all parts of the rod by gradually tapering the diameter of the rod and then abruptly terminating it at a point where the radiation has been essentially completed. By well-know proper design techniques this radiating structure forms a directional endfire antenna with the gain determined primarily by the length of the taper.

15

The dielectric rod transmission line can be evolved into a coaxial dielectric transmission line by surrounding the core rod with a second dielectric cylinder of slightly lower dielectric constant. This outer sheath confines the electric fields less tightly inside the dielectric material than does air with its
20 relative dielectric constant ϵ of 1, but serves to protect these fields from outside influence. This is the concept used in optical fiber transmission lines.

In accordance with the present invention, features of the dielectric rod antenna and coaxial dielectric transmission lines are combined to form a

series of concentric collinear apertures, each operating in the fundamental HE₁₁ mode over greater than 2:1 frequency ratios in their respective frequency bands.

- 5 Referring to Fig. 2 the essence of the present invention is depicted in schematic form. Antenna 20, which in the embodiment depicted hereinbelow is configured for operation both at 9.4 GHz in "low" frequency X-band and at 94 GHz in "high" frequency W-Band, includes core rod 22 of dielectric constant ϵ_3 which is inserted into rod 24 of
- 10 dielectric constant ϵ_2 , which in turn is surrounded by medium 26 of dielectric constant ϵ_1 (usually air), forming two concentric dielectric transmission lines, which are respectively coupled to high band waveguide transducer 27 and low band waveguide transducer 28. Dielectric constant ϵ_3 will be greater than dielectric constant ϵ_2 , which will be greater than
- 15 dielectric constant ϵ_1 . By tapering this combined structure in a controlled manner, the transmission line formed by dielectric rods ϵ_1 and ϵ_2 will provide radiating of low band radiation 30 along the tapered surface followed collinearly by radiating of high band radiation 32 from the second embedded transmission line formed by dielectric rods ϵ_2 and ϵ_3
- 20 The bandwidth, gain and beamwidth of each of these apertures can be individually adjusted for a specific application or they can be optimized for combined operation as feed antennas as part of a large active aperture phased array antenna system.

Referring collectively to Figs. 3 and 4a - 4c there is depicted a first embodiment of the present invention. Antenna 40 includes support housing 42, which is made from two symmetrical mirror image aluminum housing blocks 44a, 44b, each having length 43 of 3.5", width 45 of 2.25" and combined height 47 of 1.625". Block 44a clamps down on block 44b and is secured in place by screws 46a - 46d passing through clearance holes 48a - 48d coupling with threaded holes 50a - 50 d. Support rod 52 includes tapered rod 54, thin tubing 56 and tapered transition 58. Tapered transition 58 at proximal end 59 of tapered rod 54 has a 45° taper thereat and couples tapered rod 54 with thin tubing 56. Support rod 52 is made of a relatively loss-less dielectric material having a dielectric constant greater than that of air, e.g., having an $\epsilon_2 = 2.08$, such as that provided by thermoplastic resins, and in particular, the commonly known fluorocarbon resin Teflon (trademark). Thin tubing 56 can be formed from standard AWG20 teflon tubing. Tapered rod 54 has a straight section 60 having a diameter 62 of approximately .75" for tapered rod 54 support in cylindrical recess 64 of housing blocks 44a, 44b, and having a support length 66 of 1". Thin tubing 56 is likewise supported in cylindrical recess 68 of housing blocks 44a, 44b, cylindrical recess 68 being dimensioned to allow a press-fit of AWG20 size tubing. Cylindrical recess 68 is in axial alignment with cylindrical recess 64. Tapered rod 54 tapers from dimension 62 at the edge of housing blocks 44a, 44b to dimension 70 of 2mm at tapered rod distal end 72 over taper length 74 of 4.75".

Support rod 52 axially houses therein an axial cylindrical cavity 76 of approximately 1 mm diameter. Cylindrical cavity 76 is filled with powder-like high dielectric material 78 and has proximal end cap 80 and distal end cap 82 terminating each end. Proximal end cap 80 and distal end cap 82 are typically rigid pieces of approximately 1 mm diameter press-fit supported over a suitable length of cylindrical cavity 76, typically made of the same material as powder-like material 78, and act as plugs. Proximal end cap 80 has a taper 81 over length 84 of 2 mm and protrudes the same amount from housing blocks 44a, 44b. Distal end cap 82 has a similar taper 83 over length 86 of 2mm. Distal end cap 82 extends distance 88 of approximately 1.125" from tapered rod distal end 72.

In the first embodiment, material with a dielectric constant of 30, such as barium tetra-titanate powder or nickel-aluminum titanate powder, as is described in U.S. Patent No. 4,800,350 entitled "Dielectric Waveguide Using Powdered Material", was found to be a most effective powder-like material 78. Those skilled in the art will recognize that the material and the powder consistency can be varied to enable changeable antenna frequencies.

As referred to above, the low frequency antenna of the present embodiment is designed to operate at 9.4 GHz while the high frequency antenna operates at 94 GHz. There are, accordingly, two corresponding

waveguide ports for the respective frequency inputs, namely, low frequency port 90 and high frequency port 92. Low frequency port 90 is a standard WR90 waveguide port, having a .9" by .4" waveguide mouth. High frequency port 92 is a standard WR8 waveguide port having a .08" by .04" waveguide mouth. Standard mounting holes are provided to enable corresponding WR90 and WR8 feed transmission lines (not shown) to be coupled to support housing 42. In the first embodiment low frequency port 90 is physically located at 90° to high frequency port 92. High frequency port 92 is axially in line with the dielectric rods of the antenna. Low frequency port 90 tapers over 90° bend 94 to interface with end 96 of housing cylindrical recess 64. As such, low frequency port 90 tapers to end 96 having guide dimensions 98, 100 of .9" by .9" respectively.

Support rod 52 can be press fit into housing cylindrical recess 64. However, support rod 52 can be allowed to be axially moveable to allow frequency tuning of the antenna if desired.

Those skilled in the art will appreciate that it is possible to extend this invention to operation in three frequency bands by triaxially embedding dielectric rods of increasing large dielectric constant. This is schematically depicted in Fig. 5. Core rod 122 of dielectric constant ϵ_4 is inserted into rod 124 of dielectric constant ϵ_3 , which in turn is inserted into rod 125 of dielectric constant ϵ_2 . The non-imbedded portions of the respective rods

are surrounded by medium 126 of dielectric constant ϵ_1 (usually air), forming three concentric dielectric transmission lines, which are respectively coupled to high band waveguide transducer 127, mid-band waveguide transducer 128 and low band waveguide transducer 130.

- 5 Dielectric constant ϵ_4 will be greater than dielectric constant ϵ_3 , which will be greater than dielectric constant ϵ_2 , which will be greater than dielectric constant ϵ_1 . By tapering this combined structure in a controlled manner, the transmission line formed by dielectric rods ϵ_1 and ϵ_2 will provide low band radiation 132, followed collaterally by radiating mid-band radiation
10 134 from the second embedded transmission line formed by dielectric rods ϵ_2 and ϵ_3 , followed collaterally by radiating high band radiation 136 from the second embedded transmission line formed by dielectric rods ϵ_3 and ϵ_4

- Those skilled in the art can also appreciate that it is possible to extend this
15 invention to operation in four or more frequency bands by increasing the multiple embedding dielectric rods of increasingly large dielectric constant.

- Further, dielectric rod antennas with periodic perturbations excited by dielectric rod transmission lines have been developed for use over smaller
20 bandwidths (a few percent) to shape the radiation patterns for omnidirectional coverage and are described in the literature. These configurations, examples of which are depicted in Figs. 6a, 6b, and 6c, could also be incorporated by those skilled in the art.

As has been described hereinabove a coaxial dielectric rod antenna (CDRA) has been provided with multi-frequency collinear apertures that combines thin (relative to a half wavelength in air) dielectric rod antenna elements embedded with a series of one or more coaxial dielectric waveguides with collinear tapered radiating apertures of increasing dielectric constant, forming an array of two or more radiating apertures. Each of the radiating apertures on the CDRA can operate over a broad bandwidth in different frequency bands. All of the elements in the CDRA support both linear and circular polarizations and each of the collinear apertures can be coupled to separate electronics modules each of which are optimized for use in the specific frequency band of operation.

When combined into a phased array antenna the CDRA antenna elements can provide several novel features:

15

1) Each radiating aperture on the coaxial rod has an operating bandwidth ratio of at least 2:1. Thus, a two aperture antenna would provide an operating bandwidth of 4:1 and a three aperture antenna would operate over an 8:1 frequency range.

20

2) A multi-aperture CDRA could operate in widely separated frequency bands such as X-Band and W-Band.

- 3) The diameter of the CDRA dielectric waveguides can be very small at the lowest operating frequencies, enabling dense spacing to support operation at the highest operating frequencies.
- 5 4) The CDRA feed elements reduce the number and complexity of the electronics in the feed manifold by enabling separate, optimized electronics transmitter/receiver (T/R) circuits to be packaged in separate planes located behind the antenna surface.
- 10 5) The endfire nature of the CDRA eliminates the need for a metallic ground plane at the base of the feed antennas which is required for most currently used broadband antenna feed elements. This will reduce the weight of phased array antennas and enable mounting antennas of this type on plastic and composite surfaces now in
15 common use in aircraft, spacecraft and automotive structures.

CLAIMS

1. A method of structuring an antenna, comprising the steps of:

5 providing a first dielectric antenna rod having a first dielectric constant, the first dielectric antenna rod being coupled to a first frequency transmission source for propagating first frequency band radiation from the first dielectric antenna rod into a medium having a medium dielectric constant; and

10 coaxially mounting the first dielectric antenna rod within a second dielectric antenna rod having a second dielectric constant, the second dielectric antenna rod being coupled to a second frequency transmission source for propagating second frequency band radiation from the second dielectric antenna rod into the medium;
15 wherein the first dielectric constant is greater than the second dielectric constant and the second dielectric constant is greater than the medium dielectric constant.

2. The method of structuring an antenna of claim 1, wherein the first dielectric antenna rod is formed by:

20 forming an axial cylindrical cavity along the length of the second dielectric antenna rod:
filling the axial cylindrical cavity with a dielectric rod or powder having the first dielectric constant; and

securing the dielectric powder within the axial cylindrical cavity with
end plugs having the first dielectric constant located at respective
5 proximal and distal ends of the second dielectric antenna rod.

3. The method of structuring an antenna of claim 1, wherein:
the first frequency transmission source is axially coupled to the
first dielectric antenna rod; and
the second frequency transmission source is coupled to the second
10 dielectric antenna by a transmission line axially offset from the
second dielectric antenna rod.

4. The method of structuring an antenna as in claim 2, wherein the
second dielectric antenna rod is made of a thermoplastic resin and
the dielectric powder is barium tetra- titanate or nickel-aluminum
15 titanate.

5. A method of structuring an antenna as in any one of the preceding
claims, further comprising the step of:
coaxially mounting the second dielectric antenna rod within a
third dielectric antenna rod having a third dielectric constant, the
20 third dielectric antenna rod being coupled to a third frequency
transmission source for propagating third frequency band
radiation from the third dielectric antenna rod into the medium;
wherein the second dielectric constant is greater than the third

dielectric constant, and the third dielectric constant is greater than
the medium dielectric constant.

- 5
6. An antenna comprising:
- a first dielectric antenna rod having a first dielectric constant, the
first dielectric antenna rod being coupled to a first frequency
transmission source for propagating first frequency band radiation
10 from the first dielectric antenna rod into a medium having a
medium dielectric constant; and
- a second dielectric antenna rod having a second dielectric
constant, the second dielectric antenna rod being coupled to a
second frequency transmission source for propagating second
15 frequency band radiation from the second dielectric antenna rod
into the medium, the first dielectric antenna rod being coaxially
mounted within the second dielectric antenna rod;
wherein the first dielectric constant is greater than the second
dielectric constant and the second dielectric constant is greater
20 than the medium dielectric constant.
7. The antenna of claim 6, wherein the second dielectric antenna rod
includes an axial cylindrical cavity along the length of the second
dielectric antenna rod, the axial cylindrical cavity being filled with
a dielectric powder having the first dielectric constant, and the
25 dielectric powder being secured within the axial cylindrical cavity

by end plugs having the first dielectric constant and being located at respective proximal and distal ends of the second dielectric antenna rod.

5 8. The antenna of claim 6, wherein:

the first frequency transmission source is axially coupled to the first dielectric antenna rod; and

the second frequency transmission source is coupled to the second dielectric antenna by a transmission line axially offset from the
10 second dielectric antenna rod.

9. The antenna of claim 7, wherein the second dielectric antenna rod is made of a thermoplastic resin and the dielectric powder is barium tetra-titanate or nickel-aluminum titanate.

10. An antenna as in any one of claims 6 to 9 further comprising:

15 a third dielectric antenna rod having a third dielectric constant, the third dielectric antenna rod being coupled to a third frequency transmission source for propagating third frequency band radiation from the third dielectric antenna rod into the medium, the second dielectric antenna rod being coaxially mounted with
20 the third dielectric antenna rod;

wherein the second dielectric constant is greater than the third dielectric constant, and the third dielectric constant is greater than the medium dielectric constant.

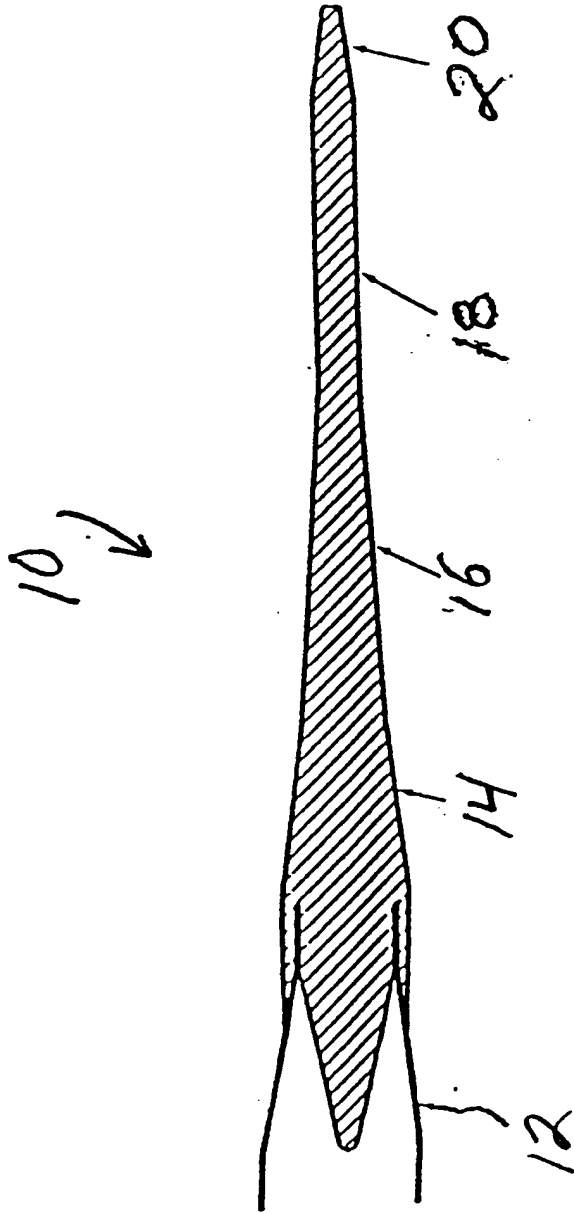


FIG. 1 (PRIOR ART)

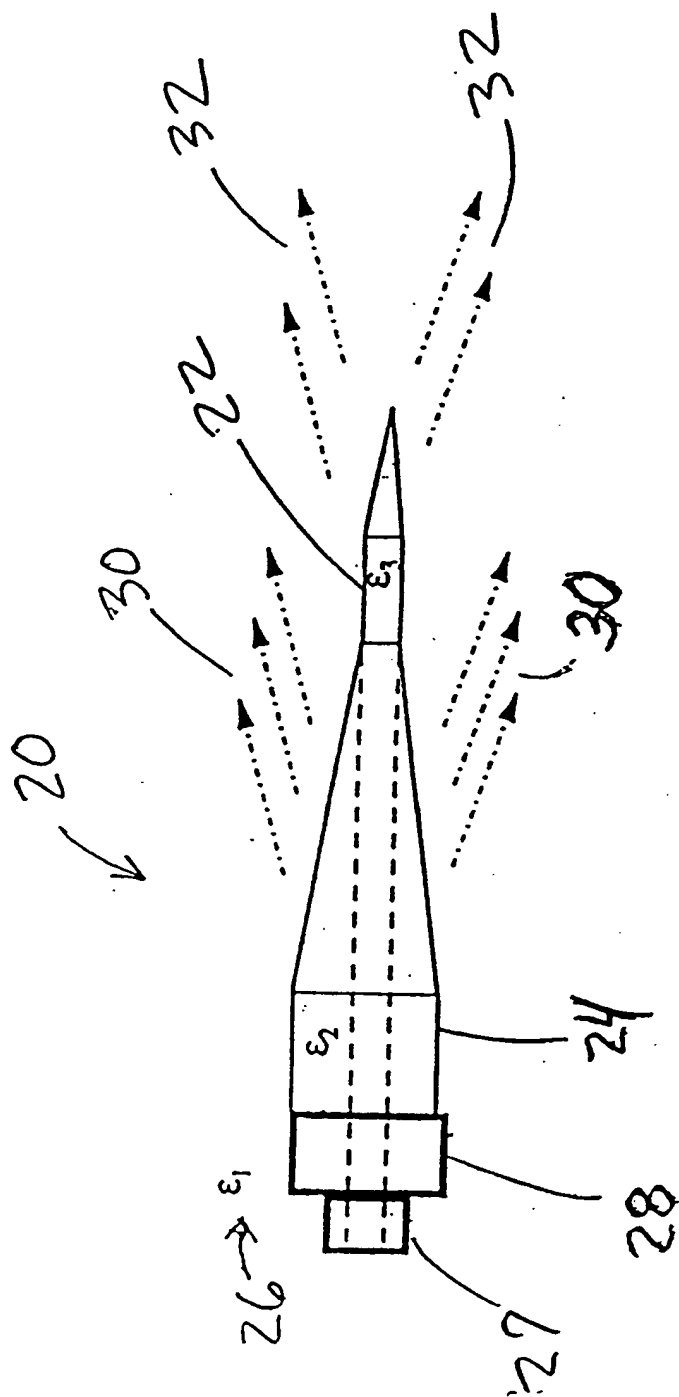
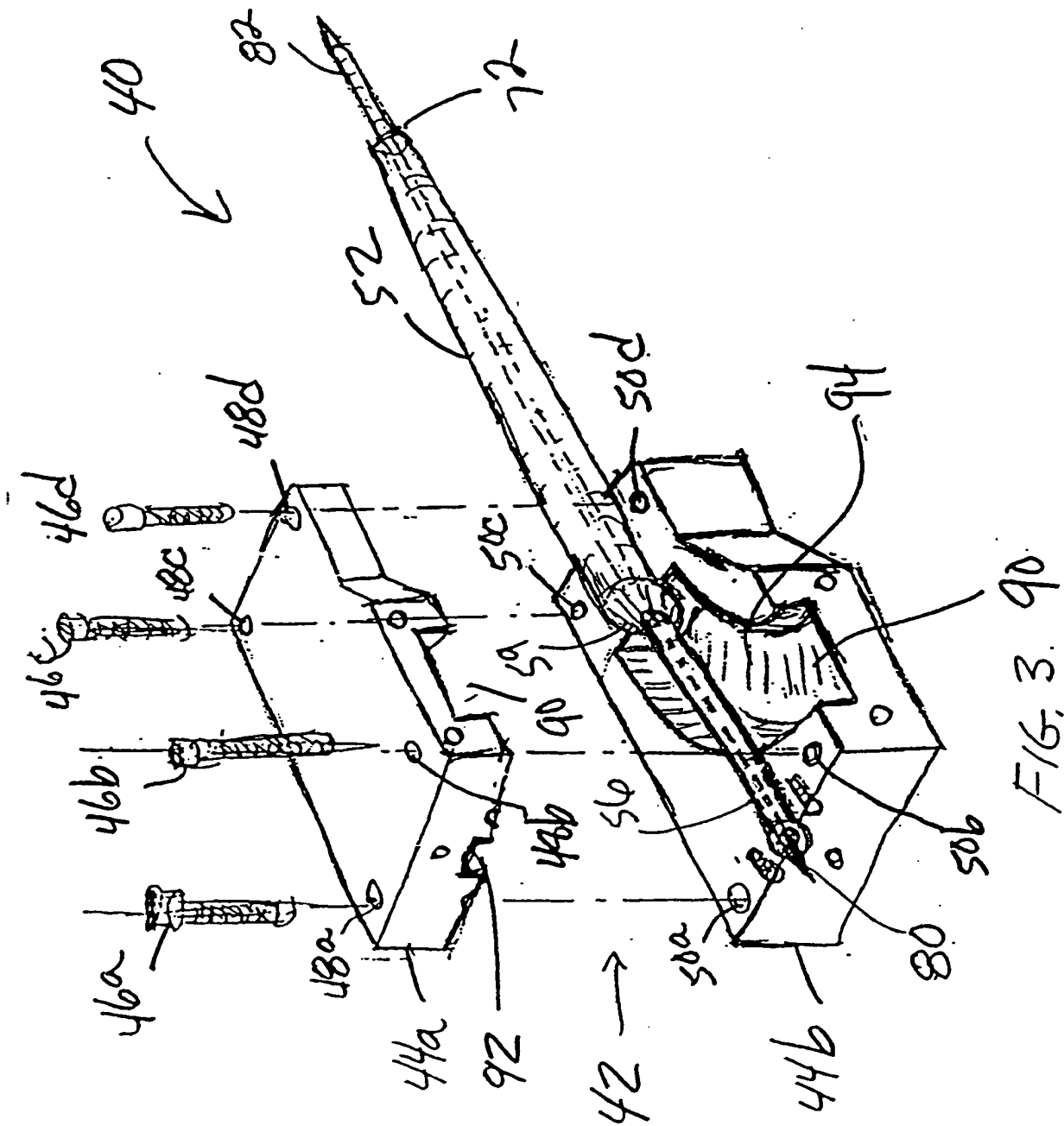
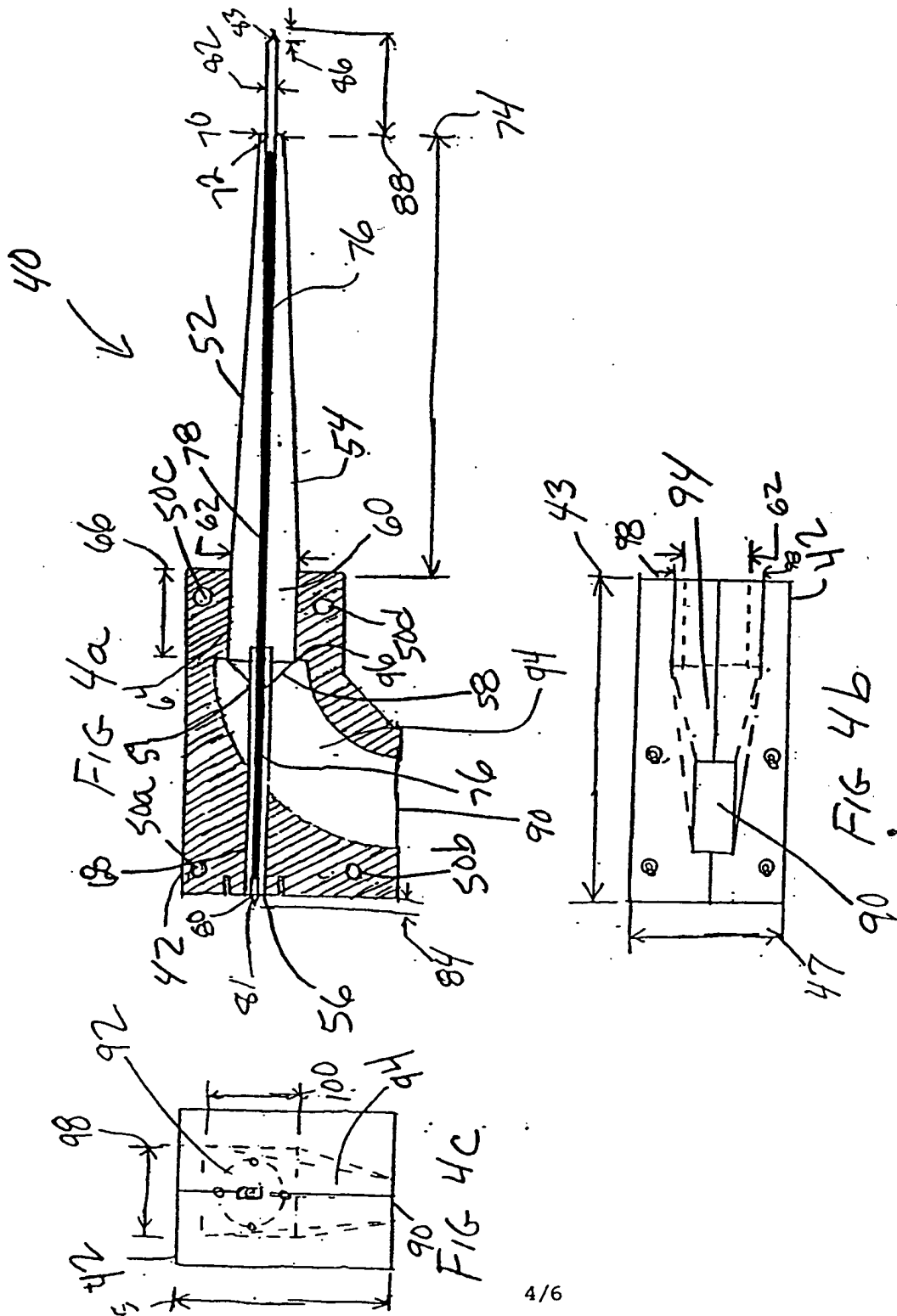


FIG. 2





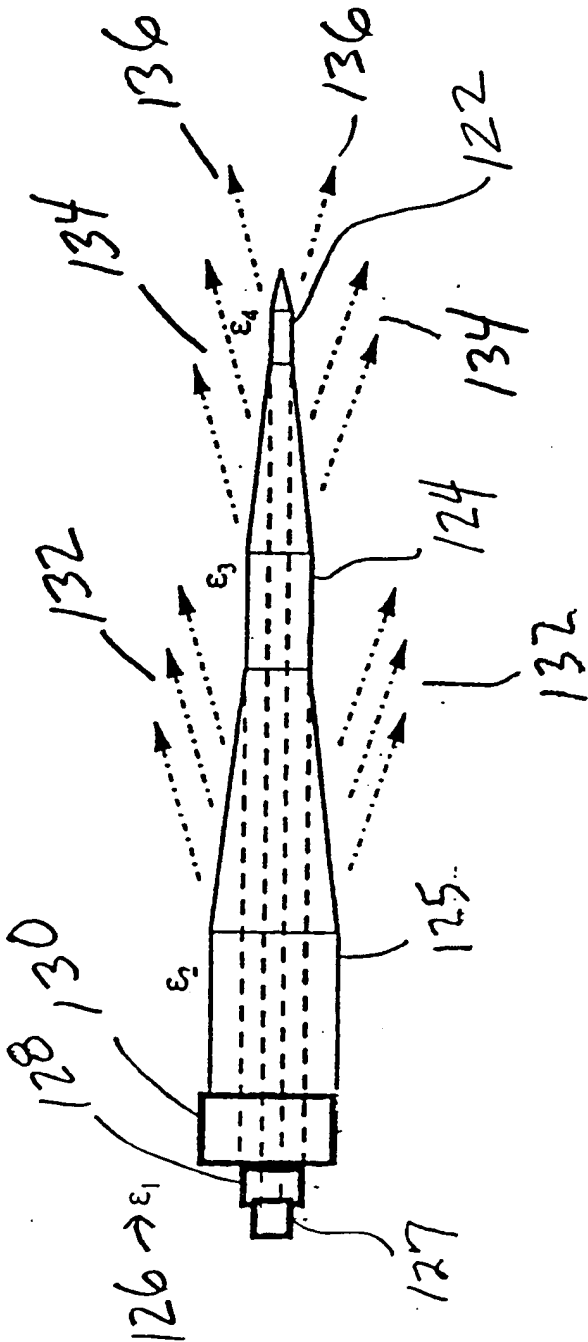
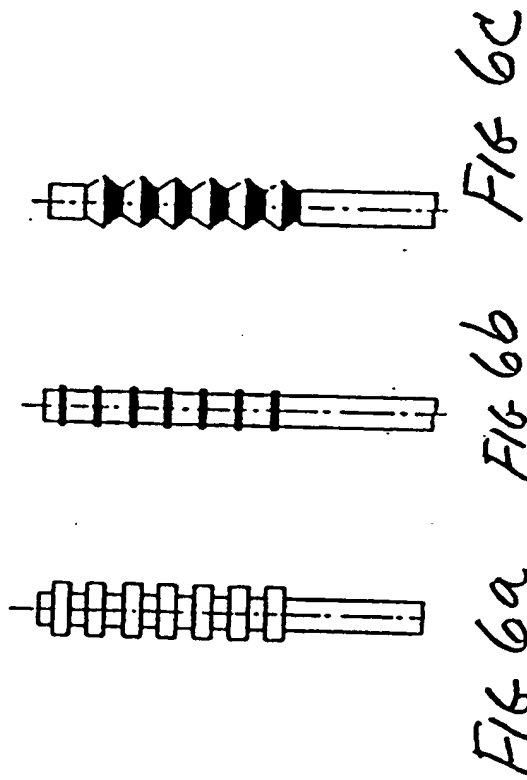


FIG. 5



INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Inter national Application No

PCT/US 00/31759

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
 IPC 7 H01Q13/24

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

IPC 7 H01Q

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

EPO-Internal, PAJ, COMPENDEX, INSPEC, IBM-TDB, WPI Data

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A	US 4 274 097 A (KRALL ALBERT D ET AL) 16 June 1981 (1981-06-16) cited in the application column 6, line 39 -column 7, line 33 column 8, line 1 -column 8, line 29 column 9, line 30 -column 10, line 5 abstract; figures 7,7A,8 ---	1-4,6-9
A	US 5 684 495 A (DYOTT RICHARD B ET AL) 4 November 1997 (1997-11-04) cited in the application column 2, line 11 -column 2, line 49 column 4, line 63 -column 5, line 4 abstract; figures 1,2 --- -/--	1,3,5,6, 8,10



Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C.



Patent family members are listed in annex.

* Special categories of cited documents:

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Date of the actual completion of the international search

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Date of mailing of the international search report

05/03/2001

Name and mailing address of the ISA

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

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PCT/US 00/31759

C.(Continuation) DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
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